

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCA-01 JUSE-00 VO-03 DHA-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1791

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 19090

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: CGEN, CFED, PFOR, SOPN, UR, US

SUBJECT: LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN IN KOVAL'CHUK CASE

REF: STATE 104213, MOSCOW 13040, MOSCOW 16002, STATE 116383,
MOSCOW 7593, MOSCOW 7245, MOSCOW 7265,

1. WEEKEND SOVIET MAIL RECEIVED DECEMBER 6 BROUGHT EIGHTY-EIGHT LETTERS CONCERNING CASE OF ALLEGED WAR CRIMINAL SERGEY KOVAL'CHUK. IN ALMOST EVERY CASE, LETTERS WERE SENT BY RESIDENTS OF VOLYN'SKAYA OBLAST WHO ALMOST INVARIABLY CITED AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN SEPTEMBER 26 EDITION OF REGIONAL NEWSPAPER, "SOVETSKAYA VOLYN"

2. MANY OF THE LETTERS ENCLOSE COPY OF THE ARTICLE WHICH IS SURMOUNTED BY A SNAPSHOT OF KOVAL'CHUK SUPERIMPOSED ON A FIELD LITTERED WITH SKULLS. EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS OF KOVAL'CHUK'S CRIMES MAKE UP THE BODY OF THE ARTICLE WHICH IS TITLED "EXECUTIONER(KAT) LIVES IN PHILADELPHIA." SEVEN PERSONS WHO REPORTEDLY SAW KOVAL'CHUK'S CRIMES WHEN HE WAS DEPUTY POLICE CHIEF IN THE TOWN OF KOVEL' ACCUSE HIM OF CRIMES, INCLUDING LIQUIDATION OF THE TOWN'S JEWISH POPULATION, PUBLIC HANGINGS AND TORTURE AND MURDER OF INDIVIDUAL PRISONERS. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES THAT KOVAL'CHUK IS A WAR CRIMINAL WHO SHOULD BE TRIED FOR HIS CRIMES IN THE COUNTRY WHERE THEY WERE COMMITTED.

3. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT KOVAL'CHUK WAS SUBJECT OF EXTRADITION REQUEST TRANSMITTED TO EMBASSY BY USA DIVISION MFA IN MAY (MOSCOW 7245, MOSCOW 7265, MOSCOW 7593). EMBASSY CONSULAR
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COUNSELOR INFORMED USA DIVISION COUNSELOR V.I. TRIFONOV DURING

MAY 13 MEETING THAT KOVAL'CHUK COULD NOT BE HANDED OVER SINCE THERE IS NO US-USSR EXTRADITION TREATY, BUT TRIFONOV REITERATED SOVIET CLAIM THAT HE SHOULD BE TURNED OVER. DURING MAY 13 MEETING, EMBASSY REPEATED REQUEST THAT SOVIET AUTHORITIES PROVIDE EVIDENCE AGAINST KOVAL'CHUK AND AVOID PUBLICITY WHICH COULD COMPLICATE US ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS.

4. SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF A LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN BASED ON A REGIONAL NEWSPAPER ARTICLE NOW MORE THAN TWO MONTHS OLD MAY INDICATE THAT SOVIET PATIENCE WITH US HANDLING OF KOVAL'CHUK CASE IS WEARING THIN. LETTERS, INCLUDING SEVERAL PETITIONS CONTAINING FIFTY OR MORE SIGNATURES, REITERATE CALL FOR KOVAL'CHUK EXTRADITION AND TRIAL IN USSR AS A WAR CRIMINAL. NEXT STEP IN ANTI-KOVAL'CHUK CAMPAIGN COULD CONCEIVABLE BE AN ARTICLE IN CENTRAL PRESS WHICH WOULD BE AT LEAST IMPLICITLY CRITICAL OF US HANDLING OF ACCUSED WAR CRIMINALS.

5. EMBASSY POUCHING SAMPLE OF MATERIAL RECEIVED FOR DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION AND WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING PRESS GUIDANCE RE LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN IN KOVAL'CHUK CASE.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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